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**FY 2019**  
**SMALL NEPA PROJECT DESCRIPTION**  
**Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests**

Please **do not leave any field BLANK**, unless it does not apply.  
Submit form (Word doc) electronically to jjchynoweth@fs.fed.us by **May 9, 2019**.

*(NOTE: Italicized / red comments are for reference only. You may delete them when completing form.)*

<b>Project Name</b>	North Fork Aspen 2
<b>District Name (or "Forestwide")</b>	North Fork
<b>County where project located?</b>	Clearwater
<b>FS Personnel Name, Phone Number and Email</b> <i>If a partnership, please add name, phone and email; however, an FS employee MUST BE the project proponent and point of contact.</i>	Mike Pruss, Wildlife Program Manager (208)-935-4289 Michael.pruss@usda.gov  Craig Roach (208) 476-8298 croach@fs.fed.us
<b>Legal Location</b> <i>Township(s), Range(s), and Section(s) of project.</i>	T39N R9E S12, 13; T40N R8E S1, 12; T40N R7E S23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34; T40N R8E S2; T41N R11E S21 T40N R9E S6; T41N R11E S3, 4, 12, 13, 14.
<b>District Ranger / Line Officer's Name</b> <i>Person(s) responsible for signing the decision document</i>	Andrew Skowlund
<b>Is the project associated with meeting a Forest target?</b>	Yes: Terrestrial Habitat, Fuels, Vegetation
<b>Which CE Category does this project fit?</b> <i>Provide citation: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(x)</i> <i>See below regarding 220.6(d)(x) projects.</i>	36 CFR 220.6(e)(6)

A Project Record or written Decision are not required for projects for 36 CFR 220.6 (d) categories except at the Decision Maker's discretion.

*IF being submitted under 36 CFR 220.6 (d), does the Decision Maker want a written Decision?*

Yes      No

*If no, this form **does not** need to be filled out nor submitted to the Small NEPA planner.*

*If yes, provide the category above, complete the remainder of this form and have Decision Maker submit it to the Small NEPA planner.*

**At what level does the Decision Maker want the project scoped?**

Internal   X        External\*       

*Internal scoping will be through the Small NEPA IDT, unless otherwise specified. Scoping would be documented in the Extraordinary Circumstances Checklist.*

*External scoping will be with the public via a scoping letter, a legal notice, and the scoping letter posted on the NPCWNF website. The Project will only be scoped to the Tribe(s) et al (see \* below), unless otherwise specified.*

*\*For external scoping, please to complete block below.*

**Provide a list of the individuals, groups, agencies, etc. (other than those listed below\*) with their mailing address and/or email address, of those who will be included for external Scoping.**

- DO NOT provide only a name.
- DO NOT leave this box blank: If no additional individuals et al are to be scoped please enter N/A.

N/A

*\* The Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Tribes will be scoped. The following will also be included for all SN scoping: Friends of the Clearwater, Idaho Conservation League, Thomas E. Peterson and Bill Mulligan.*

**What Level of Analysis (below) does the Decision Maker want for the Project?**

  X   **Low level:** If the project's level of public scrutiny is projected to be relatively low or unknown, the line officer chooses who we would contact for scoping (limited). In this case specialists would only do the checklist for each project. Documentation for low level analysis projects would be a completed checklist filled out by the specialists, including the name of the specialist who performed the analysis, the project name, and date it was completed. No other written documentation would be generated.

       **Moderate level:** If the project's level of public scrutiny is projected to be relatively moderate to high, then the line officer chooses who we would contact for scoping (a little broader). In this case, specialists would complete the checklist with the only write up being for items that are present and the rationale for the effects call. No write up would be given for items in the checklist that are not present. If the determination is no effect (which generally speaking, most CE's should have zero to very little adverse effects), then document why that determination was made in one paragraph or less. If the determination is an adverse effect, then why that determination was made would be written in less three paragraphs.

**List the Management Area(s) in which your project is located.**

Roaded Units: E1 in the Clearwater National Forest Plan (see Table 1, p. 10 below)

Roadless units: A3, C1, C4, C8S, E1, E3, and US in the Clearwater National Forest Plan (see Table 2, p. 10 below)

**What are the desired conditions (*relevant to your project*) for the Management Area(s) listed above?**

**Management Area**

**A3 Goals:** Manage optimum wildlife (primarily elk) habitat within limits necessary to meet visual management standards and to maintain a semi-primitive setting.

**C1 Goals:** Rehabilitate big-game habitat for thermal cover, security, and forage as needed to provide optimum habitat conditions.

**C4 Goals:** Manage big-game winter range to provide sufficient forage and cover for existing and projected big-game populations and achieve timber production outputs.

**C8S Goals:** Wildlife objectives are primarily oriented at elk habitat management..... Maintain or enhance moose habitat as indicated by project or area analysis.

**E1 Goals:** Provide optimum, sustained production of wood products. Timber production is to be cost effective and provide adequate protection of soil and water quality. Manage viable elk populations within areas of historic elk use based on physiological and ecological needs. Manage a range of water quality and fish habitat potential from high fishable in several of the key anadromous and resident fish streams to a low fishable in the Palouse District and portions of the Pierce District.

**E3 Goals:** Manage timber while providing maximum protection of soil and watershed values. Manage the big-game summer range for a minimum of 25 percent potential elk habitat.

**US Goals:** Manage for resources other than timber such as dispersed recreation, and big-game summer range as appropriate.

*Desired conditions are described in Chapters 2 & 3 of the Nez Perce and Clearwater Forest Plans.*

**Is the project in an Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA)?**    **Yes\***    No

If yes, which one?

Of the 22 total treatment units, 13 are distributed between the Mallard-Larkins (10), Meadow Creek–Upper North Fork (1), and Hoodoo (2) Roadless Areas. (see Table 2, p. 10 below)

*\* Fill in the 'Project in Roadless Area' table below, **AND** complete a Briefing Paper - note map requirements. Provide the completed Briefing Paper to the Environmental Coordinator and Brian Riggers prior to scoping.*

Is the project in a congressionally designated area, ex. Wilderness Area, Wild & Scenic River Corridor, Research Natural Area, Historic Trail, etc.? Yes\* ☒ No

If yes, which one(s)?

*\* Please contact Carol Hennessey, [cahennessey@fs.fed.us](mailto:cahennessey@fs.fed.us), 935-4270, **BEFORE** submitting this proposal, to discuss how the project may affect the designated area.*

*\* For projects that occur in the **Lolo Trail National Historic Landmark**, please contact Steve Lucas, [slucas@fs.fed.us](mailto:slucas@fs.fed.us), 208-983-4040, **BEFORE** submitting this proposal, to discuss how the project may affect the designated area.*

Are there Floodplains or Wetlands in the project area? Yes ☒ No

Are there Municipal Watersheds in the project area? Yes ☒ No

If yes, which one?

Is the project located in an RHCA? Yes ☒ No

**What is the Purpose and Need for the proposed action\*?**

Aspen clones represent a unique habitat on the forest, regenerating and expanding them will maintain an important component to overall habitat diversity. Regenerating stands are important foraging areas for elk, deer, and moose as well as foraging and fledgling dispersal areas for neo-tropical migratory songbirds. Where turkey range overlaps with individual sites, they will be important brood-rearing and foraging areas for turkeys. The aspen and associated fruiting shrubs in the regenerating stands will provide important summer, fall and winter forage for ruffed grouse.

*\* The purpose and need describes: Why the action being proposed at this location at this time (the problem/the need for the action?). And the desired goal/outcome (the purpose) of the action.*

**Describe the Existing Condition of the project area.**

Mature aspen clones without periodic disturbance become encroached by the dominant surrounding conifer habitat types, until the clone is a fraction of its peak size. Mature clones serve as important seed sources for new aspen stand development, but provide lower value wildlife habitat than young clones. Aspen is generally in decline in the western U.S. and without active management is likely to continue to decline, including on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. Most aspen clones on the forest are of small size (2-20 acres) due to a number of factors, but this small size provides the opportunity to efficiently double or triple their size by removing in-clone and adjacent competing vegetation at the same time that the mature clone is being cut to reset the seral clock.

## **Describe the Proposed Action.**

What is provided will be used in the Scoping Letter (*external only*), by the resource specialists for their effects analyses, and in the Decision document.

The project includes treatment units inside and outside of a Roadless Area. The units inside a Roadless Area will go through the Regional Forester/Roadless Commission review process.

### **Who** will do the work:

Treatment units will likely be cut by U.S. Forest Service fire crews.

### **Where** the work will take place:

The project proposes treating up to 22 aspen clones (total 324 acres) in the Eagle Point (6), Kelly (5), Long Creek (5) and Wallow (6) areas in the North Fork RD (see tables and maps). The treatment units are separated into Roaded and Roadless:

- Roaded: Nine (9) clones in the Eagle Point (6), Long Creek (2) and Wallow (1) areas **are not located** within a Roadless Area. (See Table 1, p. 10 below.)
- Roadless: Thirteen (13) clones in the Kelly (5), Long Creek (3) and Wallow (5) areas **are located** within a Roadless Area (Mallard-Larkins, Hoodoo, or Rawhide). (See Table 2, p. 10 below.)

### **How** the project site/area will be accessed (what FS road, County road, Pvt road, etc. will be used):

- Roaded: Access to the Roaded treatment areas is to hike-in from FR683 and FR246 for the Eagle Point area, FR250 for the Long Creek area, and FR710 for the Wallow area.
- Roadless: Access to the Roadless treatment areas is to hike-in from FR250 for the Kelly area, FR250 and FR5428 for the Long Creek area, and Trail 101 from FR710 for the Wallow area.

### **What** specific actions/activities will be done (provide details):

Mature aspen and competing conifers and over-mature shrubs will be cut or girdled within the treatment unit, and competing conifers and mature shrubs will be cut or girdled adjacent to the clone in areas where suppressed aspen regeneration, or evidence of recent aspen is present. If no adjacent aspen regeneration is apparent, conifers downwind (prevailing wind direction) of the aspen clone may be cut within 100 feet of the clone, to expand the extent of the clone. Two to five mature aspen per clone will be retained to buffer against the possibility of drought induced Sudden Aspen Decline. If present, aspen with cavities capable of supporting sensitive wildlife species, such as flammulated owls, will be retained.

Small sales or firewood sales may be offered in areas of "Roaded" Management Area E1 with existing access.

A potential follow-up project, if needed, will be to burn treated stands, most likely as part of a larger landscape burn. Any follow-up burning will be proposed as a separate project.

### **What** equipment (mechanical/non-mechanical) will be used to accomplish the actions/activities:

Cutting will be completed by hand using chainsaws.

### **What**, if any, monitoring will be conducted post-implementation:

Project areas will be monitored one year post treatment to evaluate immediate effect of treatments. Project areas will be re-evaluated 4-5 years post treatment to ensure that aspen regeneration is not suffering from Sudden Aspen Decline and document elk utilization, and to determine if various elements of the habitat treatments should be replicated elsewhere on the forest in future projects. Elements to be evaluated via ocular estimates include % regeneration of cut portions of the clones, % survival of the residual mature aspen trees, regeneration response of suppressed aspen in clone's halo area.

**List the Design Criteria / Mitigation Measures \* to be included with the Proposed Action.**

Cutting will occur outside of the migratory bird nesting seasons (April 15-July 15).

Maintain a minimum 40-acre yearlong no-treatment buffer around recently occupied goshawk nest trees.

No ground disturbing activities would be allowed in occupied post-fledgling goshawk areas in the vicinity of recently occupied nests from April 15 to August 15.

No cutting in old growth.

No cutting in RHCA's.

The Project Wildlife Biologist will be notified of any sightings of threatened, endangered, or sensitive/rare wildlife species during project layout and implementation (ex. lynx, wolverine, flammulated owl). If species are located during project layout and implementation, the District wildlife biologist will be consulted and appropriate protection measures, including avoidance or timing modification will be implemented.

*\* Additional Design Criteria/Measures can be listed under "Additional Information" on the last page of this form*

**Small NEPA IDT/resource specialists are listed below. Contact them if you have any questions regarding their resource for your project.**

Botany – Mike Hays, [mhays01@fs.fed.us](mailto:mhays01@fs.fed.us); 983-4028

Fisheries – Derrick Bawdon, [dbawdon@fs.fed.us](mailto:dbawdon@fs.fed.us); 963-4211

Heritage – Steve Lucas, [slucas@fs.fed.us](mailto:slucas@fs.fed.us); 983-4040

Hydrology – Cynthia Valle, [cvalle@fs.fed.us](mailto:cvalle@fs.fed.us); 963-4203

Minerals – Marty Jones, [martinjones@fs.fed.us](mailto:martinjones@fs.fed.us); 983-5158

Recreation – Carol Hennessey, [cahennessey@fs.fed.us](mailto:cahennessey@fs.fed.us); 935-4270

Soils – Alex Rozin, [alexandrarozin@fs.fed.us](mailto:alexandrarozin@fs.fed.us); 842-2100

Wild and Scenic River – Chris Noyes, [chnoyes@fs.fed.us](mailto:chnoyes@fs.fed.us); 935-4251

Wildlife – Jim Lutes, [jamesrlutes@fs.fed.us](mailto:jamesrlutes@fs.fed.us); 963-4202

## PROJECT MAPS

Please send – separate from this form and per the instructions outlined below – a GIS-generated map or maps of the project area (pdf format only) with the project submission email.

- Make sure that the map layers can be turned on / off / are editable.
- Make sure the map(s) fits on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.

Provide at least one map, preferably “portrait” orientation, with the project area / features as:

- a Point, e.g. culvert, bridge, etc.,
- a Line, e.g. fence, road, creek, etc., and/or
- a Polygon, e.g. stand boundaries, treatment areas, etc.
  - Do not use a point if treating an area, use a polygon.
  - Points/lines/polygons need to be distinct and easily found on the map.
  - The project area / site needs to be centered on the map, especially if only one area/feature.

Please use the Forest Visitor Map as your map’s base layer.

- Do not add contour lines to the FV map unless needed for clarifying the proposed action. Contour lines can make the map difficult to read.
  - If contour lines are needed, make sure they are distinguishable from other linear features such as roads, trails, streams, etc.
- A topo map can be substituted for the FV map. If using a topo map but the contour lines are not important the topo lines should be light gray or opaque.
- Regardless of base map, make sure there are identifiable elements, e.g. towns, roads, streams, etc. on the map to help locate the project area on the landscape and that the elements are clearly labeled.

The preferred map scale (typically 1:24K) is whatever scale best presents the project area’s location and proposed activities:

- If the 1:24K scale is too small (i.e. the project feature(s) – point/line/polygon – would be hard to find or would be indistinguishable on just one map), use a larger scale to show the overall project area (coarse scale map) and smaller scaled maps to show the project features (fine scale map).
- If the 1:24K scale is too big (i.e. the project feature is a tiny point or thin line lost/hard to find on the larger landscape), use a smaller scale to highlight the feature while ensuring there are elements on the map to identify the project’s location.
- If you need to make additional maps, please make as few as possible.

At a minimum, all maps should include (with the preferred but not set in stone location on the map):

- a Title (project name and district name only (please); centered at top)
- a Legend (features clearly labeled; lower right corner)
- a Scale (in half mile, e.g. 0\_\_0.25\_\_0.5 miles, or full miles, e.g. 0\_\_0.25\_\_0.5\_\_1.0 miles; lower left corner)
- a North Arrow (upper right corner)
  - Display all of the above in boxes with black outlines and a white backgrounds (not gray or yellow)
  - Do not ‘Halo’ the text or numbers or anything else on the map. Please.
  - The Scale needs to be large enough to read the numbers.

Finally, please include the mapmakers name and the date it was created on the map.

**The Map(s) you provide will be used for Scoping the Public and the Tribes and in the Decision document. Please make sure they show – clearly, effectively, and professionally – what activity or activities are being proposed and where they are located on the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests.**

### SHAPEFILES

The resource specialists require the shapefile(s) of the project's proposed activities before they will conduct their analyses. Providing the shapefile does not substitute for providing a pdf map.

The Project Proponent needs to send the shapefile, or a location where the shapefile can be found, to the Small NEPA Planner (currently: jjchynoweth@fs.fed.us) by the time or shortly after the District Ranger submits this form.

- Shapefiles need to include the Project Name and have the Feature (culvert, bridge, etc.) labeled.
- Shapefiles need to include the following extensions – .dbf, .prj, .sbn, .shp, .shx, and .xml.

**PROPONENT:** When submitting the shapefile(s) you must include in the email how the location(s) of the project feature(s), i.e. line, point, and/or polygon, were determined (see below):

- Field-collected GPS data;
- From existing corporate GIS data (provide name of GIS layer);
- Created (digitized) from an aerial photo;
- Created (digitized) from the existing corporate GIS data;
- Created (digitized) from the NPCLW Visitor Map;
- Other (describe).

## Projects in Roadless Area

<b>What is the Inventoried Roadless Area name?</b> Mallard-Larkins Meadow Creek – Upper North Fork Rawhide	<b><u>Forest Plan IRA Name (if different):</u></b>
<b>Identify the Idaho Roadless Management Classification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Wild Land Recreation</i></li> <li>• <i>Special Areas of Historic or Tribal Significance</i></li> <li>• <i>Primitive</i></li> <li>• <i>Backcountry Restoration</i></li> <li>• <i>General Forest, Rangeland and Grassland</i></li> </ul>	<b>Classification(s):</b> Backcountry Restoration Primitive Wild Land Recreation
<b>Does the project involve constructing or reconstructing roads?</b> Yes* <input checked="" type="radio"/> No * If yes, see <a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2">http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2</a> then navigate to Subpart C 294.23	
<b>Does the project involve cutting trees?</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes* No * If yes, see <a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2">http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2</a> then navigate to Subpart C 294.24	
<b>Does the project involve removing minerals, including common variety minerals?</b> Yes* <input checked="" type="radio"/> No * If yes, see <a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2">http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2</a> then navigate to Subpart C 294.25	

JC : 4/1/2019



Additional Information:

Table 1. Roaded Aspen Treatments

Area	Clone	Acres	Management Area (MA)
Eagle Point	1	16	E1
Eagle Point	2	15	E1
Eagle Point	3	12	E1
Eagle Point	4	24	E1
Eagle Point	5	9	E1
Eagle Point	6	38	E1
Wallow	6	18	E1
Long Creek	1	14	E1
Long Creek	2	11	E1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>157</b>	

Area	Clone	Acres	Management Area (MA)	Roadless Name	Roadless Mgt Classification
Wallow	1	12	US	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Wallow	2	11	US	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Wallow	3	8	US	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Wallow	4	20	E1	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Wallow	5	13	US / E1	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Kelly	1	5	C4 / E1	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Kelly	2	18	C4	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Kelly	3	24	E1 / A3	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Kelly	4	11	E1	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Kelly	5	11	E1	Mallard-Larkins	Backcountry Restoration
Long Creek	3	9	C8S	Rawhide	Primitive
Long Creek	4	7	E1	Hoodoo	Wild Land Recreation
Long Creek	5	18	E1	Hoodoo	Wild Land Recreation
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>167</b>			

Table 2. Roadless Aspen Treatments